

CONSOLIDATED STATE APPLICATION CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

New Jersey is well-positioned to implement the programs reauthorized under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The Governor's initiatives, New Jersey State Board of Education's goals and the New Jersey Department of Education's programs focus on the same principles as the NCLB including: standards-based reform, increased accountability, stronger emphasis on early literacy, highly qualified teachers, greater choice for parents and students, and education environments that are safe, drug free, and conducive to learning.

"Educational excellence will be the cornerstone of this administration," said New Jersey Governor James E. McGreevey. "To that end, we must focus on improving literacy standards, teacher quality, enhancing accountability, and working with business leadership to develop a highly skilled workforce." The Governor's and state's commitment to these principles is demonstrated by the following actions:

Standards-based Reform and Accountability

- Creating the Abbott Implementation and Compliance Coordinating Council to improve the education of children in our poorest school districts. The Coordinating Council is a cooperative board accountable for ensuring compliance with the New Jersey Supreme Court's *Abbott v. Burke* decision. This historic initiative will ensure that children in New Jersey's urban school districts receive the education they deserve to prepare for a successful future. The Council will examine all Abbott programs such as early childhood education, standards-based reform, and school construction and rehabilitation. The Council will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of the court-mandated programs, reviewing the progress of these programs, and resolving disputes and issues.
- Establishing a single division in the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDE), where responsibilities and issues previously scattered across multiple divisions are now integrated into one division. The new Division of Abbott Implementation will ensure the responsible and effective development of educational programs that provide children in the state's 30 Abbott districts with an education that prepares them for successful futures. The Abbott Division will also be responsible for the fiscal accountability of those districts to ensure that funds are being effectively spent.
- Dedicating over \$20 million in the fiscal year 2003 state budget for the review, revision and adoption of the Core Curriculum Content Standards, and the implementation of aligned state-wide assessments in grades four, eight and 11. A draft of the revised CCCS was completed and submitted for public review and comment in January 2002. In addition, Governor McGreevey has directed Commissioner of Education, William L. Librera, through an Executive Order, to further revise the language arts literacy standards by developing specific standards for students in grades 2, 3, and 4 by September 1, 2002.

- Establishing an Education Cabinet of business and education leaders. The Governor has charged his Education Cabinet with making the state's education system seamless from preschool to college and beyond so that students are prepared to meet the needs of New Jersey's businesses and have the skills necessary to help them compete in the changing economy. The Education Cabinet will improve coordination across all levels of the state education system and the business community to ensure artificial jurisdictional boundaries are crossed, leadership in the education community is held accountable, and children receive the education they deserve. Specifically, the Cabinet will ensure communication among and between the business community and all levels of state education policy-makers and leaders; provide for coordinated efforts to address the state's economic priorities as they relate to education, and advise the Governor on all matters related to the education of a 21st century workforce.

Early Childhood Literacy

- Requiring the development of frameworks, activities, good practices, and literacy standards for preschool, kindergarten and first grade teachers and for literacy standards for students in second, third and fourth grades by September 1, 2002 to ensure that children are prepared to learn to read when they enter elementary school.
- Creating an Early Literacy Task Force charged with identifying research-based programs, best practices and methods and approaches to improve early literacy, and recommending ways to improve teacher's professional development in the teaching of reading by June 30, 2002.
- Dedicating \$10 million of the fiscal year 2003 state budget to the development of a Reading Coach program. The first phase of reading coaches will enter the classrooms in September 2002. The Governor's plan would gradually put reading coaches in every school that needs them. There are more than 800 elementary schools where 30 percent of fourth graders cannot read at grade level.
- Convening a forum on early literacy education, with a panel of nationally recognized literacy experts. The forum will help the Early Literacy Task Force to complete its mission by fostering productive discussions between national experts and New Jersey educators from around the state.
- Creating the "Governor's Reading Club" to inspire children to read outside the classroom during the crucial learning years of kindergarten through third grade. The Governor's Reading Club will begin in September 2002 and will feature a grade-appropriate book selection for each grade each month. Children will be able to participate in games and activities on the Governor's Reading Club Web site and register each month to demonstrate they have read the selection. At the end of the school year, children who have read all 10 selections for their grade will receive a certificate of congratulations from Governor McGreevey.

- Celebrating Read Across America Day in schools across the state. The Governor, First Lady, Cabinet members, and Senior Staff of the Governor's office spent part of Friday March 1, 2002 reading to children as part of the nationally recognized Read Across America Day program, which coincides with Dr. Seuss' birthday.

School Environments Conducive to Learning

- Creating a Character Education Commission charged with reviewing and identifying best practices for character education and setting forth options for schools to undertake the development of character education programs that focus on respect, service and citizenship. The Commission will recommend programs that create classroom environments that promote effective learning and encourage students to respect one another; teach students how to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence or bullying; develop leadership skills and offer service opportunities in the community; and engage parents and community leaders in cooperative efforts to build and model good character. The Commission is composed of members from faith-based organizations, community and service organizations, and educational leaders. In order to ensure community involvement in its mission, all meetings of the Commission will be heavily publicized and open to the public.
- Budgeting \$4.75 million for public school districts and approved charter schools for the development and implementation of character education programs during the 2002-03 school year. The purpose of this initiative is to assist public school educators in adopting validated character education programs that will meet the developmental needs of students throughout New Jersey by promoting pro-social student behaviors and creating a caring, disciplined school climate conducive to learning.

High Quality Teachers

- Creating the Teacher Advisory Committee to allow teachers from around the state to provide input directly to the Governor on the educational changes that directly affect their classrooms. The mission of the Committee is to advise the Governor on the experiences of teachers in the classroom, identify and examine factors that attract bright students to the profession, and recommend ways to end intellectual isolation among teachers by building and supporting communities of learners. The Committee is charged with identifying teachers who employ the best practices and improve student achievement.
- Convening a summit on professional standards for teachers, featuring leaders from education, higher education, government, and the business community. The summit, held in (fill in month), included administrators, teachers, higher education, major education associations, and the business community in this important discussion, and involved the professional collaboration of the New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Parental Choice

- Dedicating \$3.7 million in the fiscal year 2003 state budget to support the Interdistrict Public School Choice Pilot Program. This five-year pilot project was established to increase educational options for New Jersey's students and their families. With a public school focus, the school choice program gives parents and students the ability to choose a public school outside of their district of residence without cost to the parents. Created as a small pilot with many limitations, the school choice program is testing the concept of voluntary interdistrict public school choice and its applicability to New Jersey's public school system. The 2001-2002 school year is the second year during which choice students are attending choice districts.
- Authorizing under the Charter School Program Act of 1995, *N.J.S.A. 18A:36* the establishment of charter schools as part of this state's program of public education. This effort will assist in promoting comprehensive educational reform by providing a mechanism for the implementation of a variety of educational approaches which may not be available in the traditional public school classroom. There are currently 57 approved charter schools in 15 counties in New Jersey. For the 2001-02 school year, 50 charter schools served over 13,000 students. Seven more charter schools are scheduled to open in September 2002, with one more charter school taking a planning year for 2002-03.

To achieve the state goal of educational excellence for every child, the NJDE has developed and updated a *Strategic Plan for Systemic Improvement of Education in New Jersey*, which can be found on the NJDE Web site at: www.nj.gov/njded/strategic/toc.htm. The new revised *Strategic Plan* is derived from the concepts and initiatives contained in the original version first adopted by the New Jersey State Board of Education on June 7, 1995, and subsequently revised on November 6, 1996. Similar to the original version, the new document represents a five-year plan and is a continually evolving document with annual revisions. It serves as the framework to guide statewide efforts to improve education in New Jersey, and as the blueprint for reform of educational policy at the state level. Aligned with the national goals, the *Strategic Plan* establishes educational priorities necessary for school reform and provides specific direction for state policy and local improvement efforts. The goals of the *Strategic Plan* are:

1. To ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, students in state facilities, and students with limited English proficiency (LEP) achieve the [Core Curriculum Content Standards](#).
2. To ensure that all students receive instruction and supervision from educators who possess the knowledge and skills necessary to address the [Core Curriculum Content Standards](#).
3. To ensure that all students are educated in school facilities that are conducive to achieving the [Core Curriculum Content Standards](#).
4. To ensure that all students are educated in a school system that is both programmatically and fiscally accountable for its services and resources.

5. To ensure that policies and programs promulgated by the State Board of Education and the Department of Education will positively impact the health, social and emotional well being of all students, and to foster the delivery of state services which effectively address the needs of the whole child.

The primary mission of the NJDE is to provide leadership for all children in all schools to get a rich education that will enable them to live productive and meaningful lives. (Does the previous sentence paraphrase our mission, or does it state it verbatim? Recommend that it state our mission verbatim and set it off in italics) The NJDE strives to achieve its mission by implementing programs that support the Governor's initiatives and the goals set forth in the *Strategic Plan*. This Consolidated State Application shows how the NCLB programs will be integrated with state programs to improve education in the State of New Jersey.

Improved administration (of what?) will be accomplished by coordinating the assessment of needs, the distribution of funds, and the evaluation of performance. At the local level, LEAs will in turn be encouraged to improve their administration of federal programs through the submission of a consolidated subgrant application for nine formula programs including: 1) Title I, Part A: *Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Education Agencies*, 2) Title I, Part A: *School Improvement*, 3) Title I, Part D: *Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk*, 4) Title II, Part A: *Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund*, 5) Title II, Part D: *Enhancing Education Through Technology*, 6) Title III, Part A: *Grants and Subgrants for English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement*, 7) Title IV, Part A: *Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act*, 8) Title V, Part A: *Innovative Programs*, and 9) Title VI, Part B: *Rural and Low-Income School Program*.

The NCLB Advisory Council was established in 1995 (NCLB didn't exist in 1995 – you could say, that the council was established in 1995 as *****and use whatever name it was known by at that time) to provide a broad-based representation of federal programs and obtain the field perspective during the development of the Consolidated State Application and the local education agency (LEA) subgrant application under the Improving America's Schools Act. The Council is composed of administrators, teachers, parents, pupil services personnel, charter school lead persons, and representatives of private schools, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and the Governor's office. The Council is responsible for identifying local implementation opportunities and challenges and identifying possible strategies for solutions. Additionally, members share the information discussed at meetings with colleagues to provide a collaborative process that effectively meets the needs of those students, teachers and parents benefiting from the programs. The Council actively participated in the review of this state application.